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EDITOR R.PALME DUTT

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The Editor
Devaluation—Inflation—Deflation—Delirium

Scrutator
Our Trade Unions

John Bloom
Labour and the Rent Bill

Pritt Memorial Number

Tributes from
Indira Gandhi, Julius Nyerere
Jomo Kenyatta and others

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LABOUR MONTHLY

Editor: R. Palme Dutt Associate Editor: R. Page Arnot

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Notes of the Month

DEVALUATION—INFLATION DEFLATION—DELIRIUM

'There is no subtler means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency.'
J. M. KEYNES *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 1919.

'To revise money-wage earnings downward will be much more strongly resisted than the gradual and automatic lowering of real wages as a result of rising prices.'
J. M. KEYNES, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, 1936.

July 17, 1972

Since Bill Sykes, in an episode tactfully omitted from the record by Dickens, proposed to found an Anti-Burglars Protection Union, modern British history has offered no such scintillating climax of black humour as the spectacle of Prime Minister Heath, the principal architect of inflation, proclaiming his resolve to fight inflation. Mounting inflation (interrupted by short bouts of deflation) has characterised the record of every Government since 1945 and indeed the whole era of monopoly capitalism since the end of the last century. But Premier Heath has outdistanced all his predecessors in the galloping speed and extent of his inflation, so much so, that *The Times* of May 26 could speak of 'the Heath inflation as it has now to be called,' and even hinted gloomily at the possible prospect of 'the pound going the way of the Weimar Mark.'

Twin Engines of Spoliation

In December 1966, we published some Notes under the title 'Deflation, Devaluation and Damnation'. All that was said then continues more valid than ever today, and may repay recalling in the present circumstances. That analysis was written at the height of the merciless wage freeze and deflation offensive of the Wilson Labour Government to 'save the pound'. Recalling the experience of 1931 when the 'National' Coalition Government of MacDonald and

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the Tories brought in the Emergency Budget on September 9, imposing cuts totalling £70 million to 'save the pound', and on September 20 devalued the pound, we ventured to predict that the ruthless deflation offensive of the Wilson Government in 1966 to 'save the pound' would shortly be followed, in the normal course of capitalist procedure, after all the burdens and sacrifices had been imposed on the working people in the name of 'saving the pound', by a sudden somersault to devaluation of the pound. This prediction was fulfilled in 1967. But we warned against any illusion among some sections on the left that devaluation represented a progressive alternative, as when *Tribune* on November 4, 1966, proclaimed: 'The Left . . . should fight for devaluation with tooth and claw.' We pointed out that 'deflation and devaluation are formal opposites, but in their effective significance far from contradictory alternatives. They are variations of method for the same basic offensive of finance-capital to endeavour to solve its crisis at the expense of the workers and the mass of the people.' The order of succession in the use of these alternative methods of despoiling the workers may vary. The deflation offensive of 1966 was followed by devaluation in 1967. Today, in face of the strength of the workers to resist direct attacks on wages, the present devaluation offensive of inflation has come first, and the demand for the next stage of a deflation offensive, in the name of an 'incomes policy', is becoming more and more stridently sounded from influential sections of Toryism and the ruling class. The concrete conditions vary and change, but the alternatives of the two methods of the inflation offensive and the deflation offensive still amount to what we then described as the 'two-armed bandit'.

Floating Pound—New Twist to Devaluation

When Mr Barber announced on June 23 the Government's decision to close the exchanges in view of 'special pressure' on sterling, and not to reopen them till the 27th, and then, as a 'temporary measure' to let the exchange rate of the pound float, all the official statements insisted that this was not devaluation. However, all comment, equally in Britain and abroad, treated it as devaluation in fact. The pound rapidly declined, giving rise to the press comment voiced in the *Daily Telegraph* editorial on June 26: 'Floating—Or Sinking?'. Within a week the Government was intervening with further expenditure of reserves to prevent the pound sinking below the old level of $2.40. The reality was devaluation, but it was devaluation with a new twist. In place of devaluation to a new parity, the Government had by this means established in its hands a flexible

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instrument whose sharp edge, derived from the weakness of sterling, could be pointed at all its partners and rivals. The fury of those of the other leading monopolist powers and central banks which felt their interests threatened was unconcealed. This was especially manifest in the case of France and the US. Britain's unilateral decision had driven a coach and horses through the EEC currency agreement, previously accepted by Britain, for the so-called 'snake in the tunnel' or narrow band of permitted variations of currency exchange rates. At the meeting of the EEC Finance Ministers with Barber at Luxembourg on June 26 the EEC Ministers found themselves powerless to reverse the fact of this violation. Thereafter President Pompidou subsequently declared that this violation of the currency agreement might throw into question the planned 'summit' meeting of the ten (six members and four candidates) in October; and that in any case Britain would have to fix its exchange rate before being allowed to enter the EEC on the planned date in January 1973. On the other hand, British official expression remained evasive on the question of when the floating would end, and unofficial expression suggested that the float might be prolonged well into 1973.

'Apoplexy' in the US Treasury

Britain's unilateral decision to float the pound also drove a coach and horses through the Washington Monetary Agreement (sometimes referred to as the 'Smithsonian' Agreement), reached on December 20, 1971, which fixed the exchange rates of the participants, including Britain in terms of the dollar, and which President Nixon at the time had described as 'the most significant monetary agreement in the history of the world'. Within less than a year it had collapsed. The British decision, without consultation, to defy the Washington Agreement for fixed parities with only a narrow range of permitted variation, and establish an independent floating exchange rate for the pound for an indefinite period ('a sinking rate of exchange' in the words of the *New York Times*) 'caused apoplexy in the US Treasury' according to one of the more sensational reports at this time in the British press. Simultaneously the Treasury cancelled the previous exchange privileges of countries in the sterling area, placing them in the same category as foreign countries, and thereby in effect reducing the sterling area outside the UK to Eire, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. This renewed crisis of currency relations, and the manifest gathering conflict, so soon after the attempted agreement, reflects the further intensification of the present crisis of capitalist world economy.

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From Keynes in 1919 to Keynes in 1936

When the most skilful manipulative economist of modern capitalism, John Maynard Keynes, in 1919, in the extract from his famous book *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* quoted at the head of these Notes, denounced inflation ('to debauch the currency'), he was responding to the situation of the wartime inflation which developed during the first world war and the immediately following period. Until the first world war the golden coins in the pockets of citizens expressed the visible role of gold as the objective measure of value, independent of governments, to which governments had to conform, so that they could only meet expenditure by taxation or real loans from the pockets of the citizens or bank deposits and credits. But with the first world war all the major warring governments in Europe discovered the magic of the printing press to replace gold coins for internal use by irredeemable paper, and thereby found the conjurer's wand to make possible infinite mounting expenditure on a deficit basis with no automatic limit. This wild bout of inflation of the first world war and immediately after, which reached its all-time record in the Germany of 1923, was such a menace to the elementary requirements of capitalist functioning and trade that the necessity was recognised to establish some kind of stabilisation. It was in this situation of the requirements of capitalism at this stage that Keynes denounced inflation as a menace to 'the existing basis of society'. The temporary capitalist stabilisation of the nineteen-twenties was established with the aid of American credits. But this temporary capitalist stabilisation collapsed in the world economic crisis of 1929-33. In Britain sterling collapsed in 1931 when the attempt to 'save the pound' by the programme of 10 per cent cuts all round was met by the Invergordon revolt of the sailors of the British Navy. From this point Keynes set himself to devise his alternative strategy for saving capitalism, elaborated in his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* in 1936, to replace the method of direct cuts, which provoked resistance and revolt, by the method of 'a change in the quantity of money' such as would ensure 'a gradual and automatic lowering of real wages as a result of rising prices' (p. 264). In brutal real terms, a controlled inflation as the new panacea for ailing capitalism, although, as we shall have occasion to see, he sought to deny this and to work out his own special definition of 'inflation'.

A Blind Eye to Socialism

Keynes formulated his conception in the following terms in his

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classic book of 1936 which presented his at that time new revisionist theory of effective capitalist functioning through the key role of governmental flexible manipulation of the quantity of the money supply and credit:

> Except in a socialised community where wage-policy is settled by decree, there is no means of securing uniform wage reductions for every class of labourer. The result can only be brought about by a series of gradual irregular changes . . . probably completed only after wasteful and disastrous struggles. . . A change in the quantity of money, on the other hand, is already within the power of most governments (pp. 267-8).

Keynes's virgin innocence of the socialist world and its functioning need not here concern us. He really imagined that in socialism everything is settled 'by decree' instead of perceiving the real contrast, that it is precisely in the western capitalist world where an ever narrowing circle of top monopolists, elected by no one, responsible to no one, and meeting in secret, make the effective current decisions running the economy, as against the mass participation of millions in the elaborate discussions and drawing up of the successive five year plans, or the powerful role of the multi-million strong trade unions on all questions of wages and employment conditions from the highest level to the factory floor. In consequence the immunity of the socialist world from the crises ravaging the capitalist world, whether the world economic crisis of 1929-33, or the mass depression of the nineteen-thirties, or further demonstrated today with the ravages of inflation plaguing the capitalist world and stopping at the boundaries of socialism, would appear to him to be explained because everything in socialism is settled 'by decree', and not because social ownership of the means of production makes possible the continuous, harmonious development, of production, consumption and the money supply to fit one another.

Keynes's Special Theory of Inflation

Confronted with the problems of the mass depression of the capitalist world of the nineteen-thirties and rejecting the alternative of socialism, Keynes sought to find a solution within the conditions of 'free' functioning of the capitalist economy through the key role of the state manipulation of the quantity of the money supply and credit in such a way as to stimulate the economy from depression. At that time these theories were denounced by all the official governmental spokesmen of 'sound economics', still hankering after the lost pre-1914 stability, as heretical, dangerous and 'inflationary'. Keynes admitted that his proposal meant rising prises, but denied

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that this was inflation:

> The view that *any* increase in the quantity of money is inflationary (unless we mean by *inflationary* merely that prices are rising) is bound up with the underlying assumption of the classical theory (ibid. p. 304).

'Merely that prices are rising'! Here, with this light-hearted dismissal of a 'mere' rise in prices as the accompaniment of his proposals is the crux which modern experience has made manifest to all as the canker in the new nostrum. Keynes was at pains to deny that his proposals meant inflation, and elaborated a special theory of 'true inflation'.

> When a further increase in the quantity of effective demand produces no further increase in output and entirely spends itself on an increase in the cost-unit fully proportionate to the increase in effective demand, we have reached a condition which might be appropriately designated as one of true inflation (p. 305).

But the successive governments of varying political outlook who began to turn to the new methods to combat the conditions of mass depression, whether through the New Deal in the US or rearmament and strategic preparation in Nazi Germany, did not concern themselves with elaborate definitions of what was or was not inflation, or with sophisticated distinctions between inflation 'merely in the sense of rising prices' and 'true inflation'. They were concerned to get results. This approach swept forward with the vast deficit expenditure in the second world war, and the practice of inflation continued in the years succeeding the second world war, as successive governments sought to counter their panic fears of a return to the mass unemployment which had threatened the fabric of capitalism in the world economic crisis, and consequently had recourse to various measures to give a stimulus to the economy through what they termed 'reflation'. The previous Keynesian heresy had become the orthodoxy of the 'new capitalism'.

Post-Keynesian Nightmare of Inflation

Today, the Keynesian theories are widely looked down on by modern economists as dated. But the practice of modern governments in the capitalist world has not found a new alternative beyond these theories, and continues to oscillate between bouts of inflation to stimulate the economy and bouts of deflation to check the inflation. The difference today from the period of Keynes is that the penalties of the new methods of managed capitalism, first theoretically formulated by Keynes, have now made themselves manifest to all in the nightmare of ceaselessly rising prices. The economic effect of this

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extending inflation has begun to threaten the essential assumptions of capitalism by annihilating the value of money and savings, piling up fortunes for wealthy speculators and fostering desperate gambles of speculation by those with small incomes and savings struggling to catch up with inflation. The human effect of the ceaseless rise in prices hits hardest the poorest, the aged and sick, the increasing numbers dependent on severely means-tested social security, and the overwhelming majority of the workers and professional people with low incomes. In consequence, alongside the fortunes made by the speculators and the top owners of wealth, and the soaring of the market levels of equity shares during this period, only the most strongly organised minority of those working have been able to win any partial success to force up their wages in the attempt to keep pace with the rising inflation of ever-increasing prices and new burdens of taxation. In this anarchic situation of multiple contradictions the modern post-Keynesian economists are completely at a loss to agree on any solution, and are split into opposing camps pointing in a dozen different directions simultaneously, from the apostles of a beneficial, extending, progressive devaluation to the apostles of a rigorous programme of deflation and stabilisation.

Myth of Wages and Inflation

The Heath Government and the official propagandists through the many-tongued clamour of the kept press and broadcasting seek to turn aside the anger of the people against the disastrous economic record into the channels of a campaign against the trade unions, shop stewards and wage increases as the supposed cause of inflation. But the statistical record destroys this mythology. During the first half of 1972 the trading profits of manufacturing companies increased by 17.7 per cent, compared with 8.1 per cent in the first half of 1971 (*Financial Times*, July 1, 1972). This was the same half year during which the Government boasted that the average increase of money wage earnings had been brought down to 8 per cent, and expressed horror at the success of the miners' battle in winning an increase of 14 per cent (of which 14 per cent very little was in practice left, after the effect of the Government measures to increase prices, lower the level of liability to income tax and raise insurance contributions). During 1971 and the first half of 1972 the market level of equity shares on the basis of the *Financial Times* Actuarial Index showed an increase of over 50 per cent in 18 months (*Times*, June 27, 1972). Even the *Daily Telegraph* on June 13 had to admit that 'the money supply increase at an annual rate of 21 per cent' has been

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'the most obvious direct cause of inflation', though it hastened to add that 'this is not to exonorate the trade unions.'

Tory Government's Policy of Inflation

Alan Brown in his article on 'Inflation—How It Bites' in this month's issue shows with damning evidence the direct responsibility of the Tory Government as the main immediate agent in bringing about the ceaseless heavy increases in prices and the cost of living, that is, the very inflation which it professes to be aiming to combat. The so-called tax concession of the budget, to bring a supposed benefit of £1 a week for the average wage earner and those with low incomes is nullified by the parallel increase in prices and the cost of living through Government measures, with still bigger increases in prospect, through VAT and the costs of the agricultural policy to fit the Common Market, and the many other costs planned for the entry into the Common Market. Alan Brown brings out the significance of the finding of the Wilberforce Report showing that in mining an increase in the average money earning of underground workers between 1960 and 1971 by 77 per cent in reality represented a fall in real earnings alongside a vast increase in output. He makes a devastating exposure of the false arguments which seek to present wage increases as the cause of inflation. He shows how the burden of a level of arms expenditure far exceeding that of European industrial competitors helps to saddle the products of British industry with heavier export prices and thereby limits the possibilities of competitive sales, with the consequence, through this and other wasteful expenditure, of rendering a grave proportion of the productive resources idle and a million workers unemployed, He shows the effect of government-fostered high interest rates in limiting productive development and raising prices. Through all this he exposes the direct responsibility of the policies of the Tory Government for raising prices and bringing about the heaviest inflation of any major capitalist country. To this exposure of the direct responsibility of the Tory Government in raising prices and causing inflation it is necessary to add the exposure of the parallel policy of debasing the currency by enormous expansion of the money supply and credit during the same period without corresponding productive development.

Monetary Expansion Without Productive Development

During the one month preceding the floating of the pound the money supply was expanded by £280 million, of which £60 million

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was in notes and currency and £220 million in increases in bank deposits; in addition, overseas deposits in the banking sector rose by £231 million and bank lending to the UK private sector rose by £560 million (*Times*, June 22, 1972). During 1971 as a whole, expansion of the money stock was furthered by the huge surplus on the balance of payments totalling £3,228 million, '70 per cent of it from inflows of liquid capital due mainly to the flight from the dollar,' while building societies' funds had 'doubled in the past two years to around £3,000 million per annum' (ibid.). The deliberate character of this policy of monetary expansion was proclaimed in the budget speech of Mr Barber in March:

> One of the few things I think I know for certain is that the price of stocks is determined by the supply of money and the trend of profits. Money will be in ample supply, and this package is certain to give profits a boost, leading to a rise in earnings which could be as large as 20 per cent this year, and excellent in 1973 as well.

In accordance with this policy, the budget was planned for a deficit of £3,300 million, and in the same statement the Chancellor made clear that he was prepared to regard with equanimity a consequent devaluation ('It is not necessary nor indeed desirable to distort domestic economies to an unacceptable extent in order to maintain unrealistic exchange rates'.)

Inflationary Expansion

The question of the level of the money supply and credit at any time involves many factors; and an expansion of money supply and credit may be necessary and advantageous to finance expansion of production. But this Heath-Barber expansion has had no relation to an expansion of production and has taken place in conditions of a decline in the growth of production. In 1971 private investment abroad increased to £547 million, compared with £509 million in 1970; but investment in private industry at home fell by 2½ per cent and in home manufacturing industry by nearly 8 per cent (*Economic Trends*, March 1972). The expansion was in the market value of shares already issued or through the influx of massive short term liquid capital deposits from abroad seeking a profitable base in view of doubts of the stability of the dollar. 'In 1970 (the last year for which figures are complete) industry invested rather more than £25,000 million . . . share purchases in the Stock Exchange in the same period were on about the same scale,' but only 3 per cent of these share purchases were to launch new enterprises ('mostly such marginal enterprises as selling rights in the future earnings of pop

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stars'); the other 97 per cent of share purchases were from existing holders (*Guardian*, January 27, 1972). In the latest phase the Tory Government, which had begun with a completely negative policy of cutting state advances of capital for industrial development and refusing to sustain 'lame ducks' found itself completely in a panic, in face of the consequent disastrous industrial decline, and, under the pressure of the powerful resistance of the working class to closures and cuts, made a partial reversal of one aspect of its policies and poured out capital funds to selected enterprises and for regional development in the name of 'reflation'. But this, while bearing witness to the pressure of the working class for an alternative programme, was too little and too late to wipe out the disastrous costs of the most inflationary British Government of modern times, whose record led the *Economist* on May 20 to pronounce the judgement that 'Britain is now inflating faster than any of its main competitors, with the possible exception of Holland.'

A Confession of Bankruptcy

The floating of the pound since June 23 revealed to all the instability and weakness to which the policies of the Heath Government had brought sterling in the midst of the general conditions of fluctuation and crisis of all the leading currencies of the capitalist world. The Chancellor's statement on June 29 revealed that during the critical five days of strain on the exchanges following June 16 no less than £1,000 million of foreign deposits had been withdrawn from Britain, until the extent of the drain on the reserves led to the decision to float. The significance of June 16 as the beginning of the special strain on sterling was that on that day the senseless offensive of issuing warrants of arrest for the three dockers' leaders inevitably provoked a mass strike of the dockers to defend their comrades and compelled a last-minute withdrawal of the warrants of arrest; this sequence of events aroused widespread questioning of the stability of the policies of the Tory Government and the future of class relations in Britain. The phenomenon of 'hot money' or large short term foreign deposits moving swiftly from one capitalist country to another according to estimates of the most profitable return and of the perspective of the internal situation in a given country has become in the modern period a conspicuous feature of the present stage of the crisis of capitalism, affecting all capitalist countries in varying forms and powerfully exposing the weakness of the economic situation in Britain under the Tory Government. 'In the fifteen months to March of this year . . . the inflow of funds from abroad

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accounted for nearly half of the £3.1 billion growth to £20.6 billion in money stock during this period . . . then, in the week before sterling floated, . . . nearly £1 billion fled back out of sterling, most of it in two days' (*Economist*, July 8). What was the answer of the Government to this new type of problem? On June 27 Mr Heath in parliament confessed his bankruptcy to offer an answer to this problem:

> The fact is that the whole international monetary order is threatened by the existence of highly mobile funds which can be switched out of one currency into another at very short notice and in enormous volume. . . .
>
> There can be no long term stability of the international monetary system, there can be no sound basis for an expanding world trade until the means of dealing effectively with this problem is settled.

This is indeed a confession of the bankruptcy and disorganisation in the present stage of development of the crisis of capitalism. But Mr Heath did not attempt to offer any answer to his demand for 'the means of dealing with this problem'. Nor was this surprising. For 'the means of dealing effectively with this problem' are not compatible with the social-economic assumptions of Toryism, or with those of Labour reformism, but require the distinct alternative approach of social control of finance for the organised expansion of production to make possible full employment and meet the needs of the people, together with firm exchange controls to prevent the frenzies of the present crisis of capitalism sabotaging this constructive work.

TUC and Labour Testing Time

The trade unions and the political labour movement have the key responsibility in the present situation to mobilise the united action of the widest sections of the people for the positive alternative programme which is essential. The TUC has put forward a programme for the injection of £1,500 million into the economy in the form of pensions and family allowances to achieve a 6 per cent growth rate and a reduction in unemployment to 750,000 by the beginning of 1973. However inadequate these immediate goals, the approach reflects the contrast between the striving of the trade unions, even though very limited at present, towards an expansion of production for fuller employment and to meet the needs of the people, and the class approach of Toryism which puts forward the language of similar promises to cover the real aim of strengthening class exploitation. But at the same time the TUC General Council majority has agreed to enter into cosy joint chats with Mr Heath through the National Economic Development Council (the form is of no concern

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to Mr Heath so long as the conversations take place), and to join with the Confederation of British Industries in establishing a new machinery for conciliation and arbitration, while the blackjack weapon of the Industrial Relations Act remains in being (whatever the promises of a possible future revision at an unspecified date in the light of the success of this co-operation). The aim of the Tory Government to entangle the trade unions in its net, while at the same time maintaining its weapons intact, is manifest. Similarly, the pressure at all levels in the Labour Party for new policies has found expression in the production of a 40,000-word Green Paper, intended 'for discussion', 'not to endorse', containing a host of proposals for reforms, some positive, others very vaguely worked, not offering any direct assault on the economic strongholds of capitalism, but intended to win the support of the widest range of the different sections among members and supporters. But here again the small print reveals the continued domination in practice of the old type of policies of 'managed capitalism' which have wrecked all previous Labour governments. It is true that the 'incomes policy', the attempt to enforce which by legislation wrecked the last Labour Government, is now presented as a 'voluntary incomes policy'. But this is belied by the subsequent statement that 'the extent of Government intervention will have to depend on how successful voluntary efforts are.' All these signs, equally in the trade union field and in the Labour Party field, indicate that socialists and all on the left will need more than ever to intensify their activities to ensure that present discussions on future policy, which their initiative and impetus has helped to promote, should not be allowed to end up in the same type of programme which has wrecked all previous Labour Governments, but break new ground and advance to the new type of programme which is now essential.

Class Politics

The present period is a stormy period of open class confrontation and battle on a scale unequalled since the days of Red Friday and the general strike, and with a far higher level of working class strength of organisation, militancy and solidarity. The new feature of the present period has been in the landmark victories won when united working class action, with lively new initiatives, mass enthusiasm and inspiring solidarity from all sections of the workers, has successfully defied all the pressure and threats and new weapons of the Tory Government. The victories of the miners, the railwaymen, the dockers and the UCS workers have now been followed by the present

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class battles extending to the building sites, the manifold sit-ins and work-ins in enterprises all over the country, and the militant fight of the tenants with the general support of the labour movement against the Housing Finance offensive. The new forms of struggle, as described in the article of Finlay Hart on page 373, have been evolved by the creative initiative of the working class in the present period. It is true that the weapon of the Industrial Relations Act has won a partial success in the sphere of the upper trade union leadership, in that the threat of financial sequestration has led the General Council majority to renounce the Special Congress decision for absolute non-co-operation. But all the weapons of the Tory Government offensive and its anti-union legislation, the threats of financial penalties and prison, have proved powerless when confronted with determined and united mass resistance, as shown in the initial test of the warrants of arrest against the dockers' leaders which had to be withdrawn. Therefore, the Tory Government has changed its tune, expresses conciliatory language and courts Victor Feather and the General Council. The aim is to divide the workers, draw the General Council majority into the net of co-operation, and concentrate the offensive against the militant forces of trade unionism and the shop stewards. If this strategy fails to break the resistance of the working class it is necessary to be prepared for every further type of tactical move, adventure or aggression from the side of the Tory Government. Such could be the sudden noisy proclamation of a 'national emergency' to seek to unloose a campaign of denunciation and hatred against the militant forces of trade unionism as the supposed enemy of the nation; or alternatively gestures towards some type of coalition forms to meet the 'national emergency'; or the sudden holding of a general election with possibly the unspoken intention that a right-wing Labour Government should be called on to fulfil the tasks which the Tory Government has found itself unable to carry through in the face of the workers' resistance. In the present unstable situation it is necessary to be prepared for many sharp turns and changes. All this makes more necessary than ever the strengthening of socialist class consciousness and awareness among extending numbers; the indispensable role for the fulfilment of this task of a nationally organised political party based on socialism and the class struggle, represented by the Communist Party, not in separation from the rest of the left, but as an integral part of the whole left advance; and the exertion of every effort to build up the strongest unbreakable working class and popular unity for the battles in front.

R.P.D.

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OUR TRADE UNIONS— TIME FOR CHANGE

Scrutator

THE obvious and open class war, now being waged with considerable intensity by both sides in Britain, has exposed both the policy and structural deficiencies of the TUC. The campaign against the Industrial Relations Bill and the demonstrations throughout the country (particularly in London in February 1971) showed the potentialities of mass commitment. However, the December 8 stoppages showed the limitations imposed on this by the fact that an offensive policy had not been developed during the campaign against the Bill. The two Congresses held by the TUC demonstrated the developing situation and also the policy shortcomings. Yet both were advances.

There can be no easy answer to the problem—an urgent one for the British working class—based on a simple denunciation of personalities on the TUC General Council. The first thing to understand is that the General Council reflects the basic strengths and weaknesses of the unions themselves, and in particular the lack of class content in the policies pursued by the right-wing leaders since 1926-27, following the general strike. That strike itself had revolutionary potentialities which were never sufficiently assessed by the working class, and which were obviously opposed by the right-wing leaders of the pre-1926 period.

It has always been insufficient to say that there was a defeat of the working class in 1926 because there was a general strike. The defeat arose from the classic weakness of the British labour movement as a whole—its refusal to base itself on a clear theoretical understanding of the class set-up in Britain. Consequently there has been a failure to analyse the structure of British imperialism, and to realise that inevitably capitalism had to be challenged by socialist thinking and action based upon a clear direction and philosophy.

The situation therefore is this: the trade unions will fight in their various ways for demands of their own union or particular industry, and will wage militant struggle. But their sights are set too low. The need to raise these, when this is generally grasped, will show the necessity for new leaders, consciously based on class-orientated policies. Why are we so timid and shy in raising revolutionary perspectives as the positive and firm reply to the ruling class, which seeks to run the workers' organisations into the ground? A TUC

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with a majority for class struggle will be exceedingly unpopular with our monopoly-owned or controlled press and television, but it could give the necessary dynamism to the Labour Party also to transform itself and its leaders.

At this present moment, history is again presenting the problem to the British working class and its movement. The passing of the Industrial Relations Act and its subsequent operation has torn away the fallacies which have too often motivated our movement over the recent period.

The miners' and railwaymens' disputes brought out the ingredients of the situation into the light of day. There was the willingness of the miners to struggle for their industrial demands, come what may; and as the struggle developed not to care a fig for the political consequences, being reminded very quickly of their past experience of class struggle. Having politically associated themselves with the build-up of the Labour Party, they had always hoped this would provide an idealistic conception of socialism as an alternative to the oppressive capitalist system. Their experiences have produced amongst their rank and file, and in their leadership, class-conscious, politically positioned leaders.

Some of the miners' leaders, however, experienced surprise and shock as the strike progressed. They had had no training for the kind of struggle that was now forced on them by the policy of class confrontation pursued by the Heath Government. And this factor was clearer still so far as the railway leaders were concerned. Again there were obviously those who had a political class consciousness and direction, but others—perhaps genuinely seeking to serve the interests of the people they represented—were at a loss to understand what to do next. They were certainly willing to be obstinate, and to reflect (with more conscious trade union leaders) a desire to pursue the struggle.

These actions, together with the offensive against the Transport and General Workers' Union, with its fines for contempt of Court, threw everything up for new thought and assessment. The possibility of a general strike, arising from a drift into action, was one thing; the possibility of resisting the activities of the Court by an official general strike was quite another. The leadership of the TUC could not contemplate this because it obviously meant going over to an entirely new political direction and aim. It meant making a challenge for socialist power. It meant making a challenge to the whole set-up as at present established.

Some put the view that the membership of the affiliated unions

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would not take part in a general strike, others that one could not easily mount one for industrial reasons in their particular industries, even if the membership was willing. All sorts of confusion came out of that situation, reflecting the fundamental weakness in the direction of the trade unions in a situation where a developing militancy among the working class created an upsurge in the unions and amongst people generally. So a whole series of contradictions were thrown up. But the call for a salutary general strike is being increasingly heard in an endeavour to impress the ruling class that things are changing.

It is in this developing situation, with continued pressure from the ruling class on the trade unions, that the unions at all levels will need to make a reassessment. The idea that trade unionism can be an end in itself has to be changed. The unions must be seen once more as the training ground for workers to challenge capitalism. Attention must always be paid to the workers' immediate demands on wages, hours, holidays, etc., and for reforms in this regard—but reform of capitalism as an end in itself must be rejected. In the meantime, the upsurge, the greater understanding of the need for more powerful, more forceful trade unions, must be utilised to produce changes at all levels of leadership. This does not mean that we need suddenly to place a lot of wild men in responsible trade union positions. But what we do need is to elect and produce leaders who will reflect the new consciousness of the working class, who base themselves on a new conception of the role of the trade union movement in Britain and the world, and who reject the basic reformist policies of the past and present, which have continually led the working class into set-backs and defeats and will—if continued—lead to disunity and disaster.

Britain, pregnant with the need for great political and social change, must be able to look to its trade unions for a lead. As they face the onslaught head on, they must rapidly grasp its meaning. The situation is of the 'them and us', 'hammer and anvil' type. Very much is at stake and the policies and leaders must be found to ensure that we advance, not retreat.

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LABOUR AND THE TORY RENT BILL

John M. Bloom
Executive Committee member
Greater London Regional Council of the Labour Party

HOUSING is in the front line of the inflationary wave that has been sweeping through Britain this past couple of years or so. Home buyers have been savagely hit. Monthly mortgage payments over a 25-year period for an eighty per cent loan have jumped from a national average of £18.30 to £32. Tenants too have been under fierce assault—and can anticipate even more rent increases, if the Tory Government's new rents plan is put into operation.

Significantly, the Tory proposals fail to include any provision for building more homes and rehousing the homeless. There are no plans to renew the millions of houses and flats lacking basic amenities, nor even to clear away the slums. And for very good reason. Slums and lack of decent housing conditions, high rates of interest and big mortgages and rents spell out PROFITS in bold capitals.

Take just one example. In March 1971, Metropolitan Estate and Property Corporation (whose chairman was later to be Sir Henry Johnson, former chief of British Rail) sold in excess of one hundred blocks of flats to Viscount De L'Isle's banking and property empire, First National Finance Corporation, for £35.5 million. Fifteen months later, it was announced that the noble lord's empire was disposing of the blocks, comprising something like 8,000 to 10,000 homes, to twenty-two different property companies for £76 million. The actual profit on the deals is expected to be about £24 million. (This specimen of commercial enterprise and discernment went almost unnoticed by the Tory press which was otherwise occupied denouncing the railway workers for 'holding the nation to ransom' in pursuit of their 'inflationary' £37.2 million wages settlement.)

All of which underlines Engels's classic remark: 'As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist, it is folly to hope for an isolated solution of the housing question' (*The Housing Question*, 1887). Tragically the Labour Party with its tremendous wealth of housing experience in government and parliament and in municipal administration has failed even to begin to appreciate the elementary, yet profound, logic of Engels's comment.

This is abundantly obvious in virtually every line and sentence of the Party's new draft policy, *Labour's Programme for Britain.*

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After reaffirming that the Tory rents plan ('this pernicious housing finance legislation') will be repealed, the draft promises to put a socialist housing policy in its place. What follows is admirable in so far as it goes, which isn't unduly far. It is a hotch-potch of long-needed reforms, but nothing more than that.

Anomalies in local authority housing revenue accounts, whereby council tenants are carrying the burden of the costs of maintaining such items as estate lighting and roads that are not of direct or sole benefit to them, will be straightened out. The 'fair rents' procedures for private tenants should be reviewed. Tenants of furnished flats will be accorded security of tenure. The aim should be progressively to eliminate private profiteering in rented accommodation. Local councils could be enabled to purchase private landlord-owned properties; tenants could be given the necessary assistance by local councils to take over properties on a co-operative basis. It is accepted that existing council tenants will be involved 'far more' in the management of their estates. The whole basis of housing subsidies will be radically reviewed. The level of financial assistance to the council tenant should be broadly comparable in total to that given to the home buyer. 'We propose that surtax payers should no longer be eligible for relief at the higher tax rate and that all relief on mortgages to purchase on an additional house should be abolished.' Empty office blocks should be compulsorily rated on a scale which could rise up to 200 per cent. Land needed for development should (it is well worth observing that 'should' rather than 'must' is consistently used throughout the draft policy statement) be publicly owned 'since private speculation leads to massive costs to the community for much-needed houses, schools and other socially necessary projects.'

When the important matter of building new homes is reached, the draft begins to get very coy and bashful. It states simply that under the Wilson Government an average of 400,000 new homes were built each year between 1964 and 1969 (the high point being 1968 when 413,714 new homes were built in Britain) and that 'it must be our aim to improve on this.' Compare this with Labour's one-time target of 500,000. Harold Wilson gave a firm pledge on the issue at an election meeting in Bradford on March 27, 1966, that 'we shall not allow any developments, any circumstances, however adverse, to deflect us from our aim.'

In a 1965 statement, the Labour Government had rightly pointed out that even this figure 'was modest in the light of housing needs . . . not enough . . . the 1970s should see still bigger programmes.'

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As we all know, Housing Minister Greenwood announced in January 1968 that the target had been abandoned as part of the post-devaluation package of cuts in social expenditure.

The new draft policy has been carefully worded and designed, not so much to avoid making 'reckless promises', but to guarantee that the Labour Party's housing vistas are dovetailed to fit in within the constraints imposed by a crisis-torn capitalist economy that has entered a period of acute recession and, possibly, slump of vast international proportions. As a socialist policy the draft is a non-starter.

The fight for a real socialist housing policy must go on. It is absolutely essential that demands for this kind of policy are voiced at the Labour Party's Blackpool conference in October. The main outlines of such a programme will mean the construction of *at least* half-a-million new homes for renting each year and the nationalisation of urban land, excepting that of owner-occupiers. All landlord-rented accommodation must be municipalised, or brought into some other form of public ownership, with tenants having a direct say in the management of their own estates. Nationalisation, based on workers' and democratic control, must be extended to the big building firms and building materials industry as well as building societies, banks and insurance companies, which between them largely dominate the financing of housing in Britain. The implementation of such an outline policy would enable housing to be considered as a social service for the first time ever. And it would mean moving towards the kind of solution to the housing question explained by Engels eighty-five years ago.

The struggle to obtain a socialist policy for enactment by the next Labour Government must not be separated from the need for a determined fight against the Tory rents plan, here and now.

The Housing Finance Bill, as the Tory rents plan has been designated, is much more than a mere blue-print for massive rent increases. Local councils will no longer have an almost completely free hand in formulating their own rent policies. Rents will be determined by a government-appointed rent scrutiny board, packed with property agents and lawyers but no representatives of tenants' associations or local councillors, and with be no right of appeal.

What should Labour-controlled councils do in this situation? They have two choices: collaborate or resist. Most have already opted for the first choice. They feel obliged to work within the rules of Tory law just as many trade union leaders feel obliged to work within the confines of the Industrial Relations Act.

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In such circumstances, tenants have the right to say: 'What is the use of electing Labour councillors, if they intend carrying out Tory policies?' Local Labour Parties have the responsibility of repudiating such councillors and of making certain they are not permitted to stand for re-election as Labour candidates. For my part, I insist that Labour-controlled councils have the clear political obligation to refuse to act as agents of the Tory Government in implementing their rents plan. They must refuse to collaborate with rent scrutiny boards. They must refuse to impose rent increases.

Labour groups taking such a principled stand would rely on the backing of tenants' associations, trades councils, trade union branches, shop stewards' committees and all the other fighting organisations of the working class, including Communist Party branches. The Tory Government could be made to give ground as the miners, the railway workers and the dockers have made them give ground on the industrial front. A really strenuous fight could even force the Government to quit altogether.

Of course, Labour councillors will be placed in the front line of the battle against rent increases. The next Labour Government will have the power, and the moral duty, to indemnify councillors against surcharges and other penalties incurred as a result of their stand against this vicious class legislation. So far the Labour Party has kept mum on this point.

A recent *Discussion Paper on Housing* has drawn attention to the fact that it eventually costs local authorities (or rather their tenants in rent payments) over £25,000 to build a £6,000 council house as a result of the heavy interests payments that have to be met over a sixty-year period. Spread over hundreds and thousands of houses and flats, loan repayments and the accompanying interest payments reach staggering proportions involving millions and millions of pounds. In the financial year ending March 1971, the Greater London Council and the London borough councils paid debt charges of £120,800,000 to the City moneylenders and other financial institutions. Published by the Greater London Regional Council of the Labour Party, the paper says the idea of interest-free loans for municipal housing must be looked at in a national context if the growing burden of debt incurred by councils is to be made lighter.

These kind of proposals must be fought for, now, if the next Labour Government is to be mandated to a policy of free or low-interest loans to local councils, and cheap mortgage facilities to home buyers. This will make it possible to begin to reduce the overall level of housing costs, both rents and mortgage repayments.

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HONOUR TO D. N. PRITT

At the ceremony on May 27 in the West Chapel of Golders Green Crematorium there was present a very distinguished audience equally from the fields of diplomacy, the law and political life. Judges mingled with diplomats and with active representatives from the trade unions, the Labour Party and the Communist Party. The commemoration addresses were delivered by Turner-Samuels and Ivor Montagu, whose tribute we publish below.

WE are here to take leave of D. N. Pritt, known to many of us as Johnny.

Our presence here sets a more intimate seal on the tributes that have flowed to those nearest and dearest to him from within this country, from all parts of the world, from all sorts. Many here today represent those for whom he fought, and those who stood beside him in battle.

How outstanding he was perhaps this generation has not yet fully realised. Some years ago I wrote that when the history of these times comes to be written he will be seen to be one of the outstanding Englishmen of his day.

I should like to explain this.

During the forties I was in Moscow at a conference when the Dean of Canterbury descended a staircase wearing his great pectoral cross. One of the most famous of Soviet film directors said to me something that would have surprised his detractors in the Church. He said: 'It is a good thing for Christianity here that our people should see and know that a Christian can also stand for the people.'

So, in a similar, and perhaps yet deeper way, it will be a good thing for the future relationships of the peoples that made up the old British Empire that so many will be able to look back and say: 'In our struggle there was one great English lawyer who devoted his courage, his passion and his skill in law toward winning justice for us.'

It may well be important too in this country that, to a generation largely feeling itself frustrated by parliament and administration, with 'law' too often become a partisan catchword or a complicated trap, he proved to trade unionists everywhere in Britain, and to his constituents in Hammersmith—simple people and their families, men and women in the forces—that they could—in the best sense—have a 'friend at court'.

I do not know enough to say that as an MP he was the very first to hold a 'clinic'. I do know that this duty he assumed so effectively is nowadays one few MPs dare ignore.

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And I will record here, as I know he would wish, his gratification at the fact that the freedom of this borough, conferred upon him, as it happened, so near the very last, proved those days were not forgotten.

We here, in this chapel, are by no means all of one mind. We represent states, parliaments, the law, trade unions, the simple people whom he benefited or who just knew him, the innumerable societies working for peace, for socialism, for friendship between nations, for freedom for those who are denied it, for justice to those unable to attain it—all those countless bodies and journals to which he was always ready to contribute effort and from whose comradeship he derived his strength.

But all of us share one quality: admiration and respect for some aspect of his personality and achievement, affection for the man himself.

Oh, Johnny Pritt had his enemies. The clarity of his tongue and pen invited them. Indeed, in respect to many of them, he felt their hostility a proof that he was on the right course. What is sure is that those who knew him best respected him most.

And what is also striking is that all those who had worked alongside him, in however humdrum a capacity, and had a day to day familiarity with his conscientiousness, his scruples, his generosity of spirit, were always eager to work once again with him, for their common causes and ideals.

Pritt was proud to proclaim himself a socialist, a believer in man's capacity to better his society, a staunch supporter of the nations and peoples striving on this path. For this he was caricatured, by those jealous of his prestige, as a 'friend of Communists', and labelled 'fellow-traveller' as though his loyalties were automatic and not inspired by mind and conscience.

He never let any taunt deter him from associating with any person or body whose work, in his view, contributed to realisation of those principles that also animated him. Those privileged to share his work knew that there never was anyone more *his own man*, with more integrity and determination to decide, for himself, what was right.

This once decided, the characteristic was courage. It would never have occurred to him for an instant to think of the consequences to himself, or to his career, of following that course. Not for nothing did he call the final volume of his autobiography 'The Defender Attacks'. No trade unionist, no victim of colonialist oppression and persecution to whose aid he could come, called to him in vain. The history of his cases is a catalogue of the social battles of his lifetime.

Such a life needed the support, the love without fail, of those nearest to him: his wife, his family. This he received without stint. By our loss, we measure their loss.

In their name, in the name of all those here and elsewhere who have derived strength from his skill, his courage, his generosity, his wit and humour, his love for people, his confidence in the sure betterment of mankind, and who will yet derive it from his example, we say farewell.

Ivor Montagu

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D. N. Pritt's Articles in *Labour Monthly*

The following is the list of D. N. Pritt's articles in *Labour Monthly*. In addition he contributed some seventy book reviews and numerous shorter pieces. Together these covered thirty-seven years of his writing. Another book was in his hands and the review in preparation at the time of his death in May.

Where they are Curing Crime (1935), The Labour Party and the Arms Stampede (1937), Where Are We Now? (1940), Federation without Foundations (1940), The People's Convention (1940), The Alternative to Churchillism (1941), The Churchill Coalition—and the Alternative (1941), Mobilise the People (1941), India (1942), First Things First (1942), Twenty Years' Collaboration (1942), Anti-Soviet Filth (1943), Common Wealth or Common Danger? (1943), USSR and Britain (1943), The Future of British Politics (1944), War Criminals (1944), The Crimea Conference—symposium (1945), The Soviet Anniversary (1946), Caucasus Week (1947), Salute to the Soviet Union (1947), Strings or Chains?—The Marshall Plan (1948), Can Armaments Be Reduced? (symposium) (1949), Strings to Marshall Aid (1949), Lessons of Blackpool (1949), The Struggle for Peace (1949), A Labour Independent Looks at the Election (1950), Oppression in India (1950), The Truth about the USSR (1950), Sheffield and Warsaw (1950), Glimpses of India (1951), More Light on Korea (1951), The Right to Strike (1951), The Pakistan Trial (1951), Glimpses of Popular Democracies (1951), Through Error to Truth (1952), The BBC Throws Off the Mask (1952), The Press and Germ Warfare (1952), French Lessons: The Duclos Case (1952), What of Our Independence? (1952), Tribute to Stalin (1953), The Great Opportunity (1953), The Way Onward from Margate (1953), I. G. Farben Über Alles? (1954), The World of Mr Attlee (1954), Disciples of Hitler (1954), Friends in Telengana (1955), A Plan for Peace in Kenya (1955), Election Prospects (1955), Illegality of Nuclear Weapons (1955), Socialism and Civil Liberty (1956), Thirty-Ninth Anniversary (1956), Eye-Witness in Kerala (1957), Light on Krupp's (1957), Forty Years On (1957), A Case for Optimism (1958), Asia and Africa in Unity (1958), True History of Cold War (1958), 'I Too am from Kerala' (1958), The Inexhaustible Grain (1958), Behind These Race Riots (1958), Light on Munich (1958), Memories of the Reichstag Fire Trial (1958), Light on Nyasaland (1959), What's this about Korea? (1960), What's this about Berlin? (1960), Light on Central Africa (1961), Home and Colonialism (1961), Political Cases (1961), Let Not My People Come (1961), Cuba Travel Notes (1962), The Wethersfield Case (1962), Fascism Shall Not Pass (1962), Lessons of Cuba (1962), West German Scandal Trial (1963), Gimmicks or Politics? (1963), New West German Outrage (1963), Dimitrov Acquitted (1963), The Courts and the Trade Unions (1964), British Guiana: Colonialist Bad Faith at its Worst (1964), Korea: Dead Myths Revived (1964), Cyprus: More Colonialist Misbehaviour (1964), What's in a Name (poem) (1964), Problems of the New Labour Government (1964), Shall Nazi Criminals Go Free? (1965), A Speaker's Conference (1965), Incorrigible Warmongers (1965), Vietnam: Challenge to Us All (1966), Neo-Nazis and the Future of Europe (1966), The Indian Elections (1967), Democracy 1967 (1967), Reflections on Aberfan (1967), Future of the Left (1968), Danger-Signal in West Germany (1968), Open Letter to a Delegate to the Labour Party Conference (1968), The Real Face of Bonn (1969), Shall War Criminals Go Free? (1969), Tribute to Ho Chi Minh (1969), General Election Ahead (1970), Toryism in Office (1970).

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INDIRA GANDHI
Prime Minister of India, New Delhi

Of the many great causes which D. N. Pritt espoused, Indian freedom was one. We gratefully remember his tireless work on our behalf.

JULIUS K. NYERERE
President of Tanzania, Dar-es-Salaam

Mr D. N. Pritt will be remembered in Africa whenever the history of the struggle for freedom from British colonialism is studied or remembered. For those of us involved he was a great example of the good political lawyer, that is a lawyer who recognised that in the freedom movement politics were sometimes more important than winning a particular case. He was a man committed to the principles of human equality and freedom who was willing to work devotedly and at personal sacrifice for his beliefs.

MZEE JOMO KENYATTA
President of Kenya, Nairobi

The late D. N. Pritt was a man of extraordinary qualities. He used courage as an instrument of compassion, and fought for his ideals with legal flair made trenchant by his caustic wit. Above all, perhaps, he was a man of rare perceptiveness, unswerving in belief that—despite all intrigues and adversities—justice would ultimately prevail. The history of past decades has been ennobled by such faith.

MICHAEL HARMEL
South Africa

When D. N. Pritt came to Johannesburg in 1952—*en route* from the trial of Jomo Kenyatta—his fame had long preceded him. Our people knew him through his many Court appearances, his record as an MP, and his lucid and convincing publications and articles. We knew him as the implacable opponent of imperialism and injustice, the courageous defender of peace and friendship with the Soviet Union, and we liked what we knew. He agreed at short notice to address a public meeting for the Transvaal Peace Council; a single announcement was enough to fill the hall to capacity. On this visit he entered upon a firm and lasting friendship with our own Bram Fischer, whom, he wrote in 1966, he considered 'one of the most splendid of living men'—words which with justice might have been applied to D. N. Pritt himself.

NOURI ABDULRAZZAK HUSSAIN
For the Editorial Board of *Al-Thakfa Al-Jadida* (New Culture), Baghdad

Iraqi lawyers and the Iraqi public pay great respect to D. N. Pritt. He was well known for his defence in 1950 of the Iraqi side against the Iraq Petroleum Company. He defended Iraqi political prisoners against the regime of Nuri Said when he was a Member of Parliament, and in 1958, when he visited Iraq after the events of July 14, he was received with great warmth by lawyers and many others who were able to express their deep gratitude. We mourn his passing.

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PRIME MINISTER

Of the many great causes which D.N. Pritt espoused, Indian freedom was one. We gratefully remember his tireless work on our behalf.

(Indira Gandhi)

New Delhi,
June 26,1972

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JACQUES DUCLOS

Senator for Seine St-Denis, former Vice-President of the National Assembly of France, Paris

I gladly join in the homage rendered to D. N. Pritt who played an important role in the campaign for the defence of Georgi Dimitrov, when he fought like a lion at the Leipzig trial against the true incendiaries of the Reichstag.

I do not forget, in addition, that in 1952 at the time of my illegal arrest by order of the French Government, D. N. Pritt intervened in order that the European Association of Lawyers could undertake my defence, which was prevented by the British Government of that time.

It is right that the memory be honoured of this ardent defender of justice and of all noble causes.

EZEKIAS PAPAIOANNOU

General Secretary of AKEL (Progressive Party of Working People), Nicosia, Cyprus

D. N. Pritt was a great friend of the Cypriot people. As Labour Member of Parliament, he frequently raised his voice both inside and outside the House of Commons against the British colonial regime in Cyprus and in support of the liberation struggle of the Cypriot people.

As honorary member of the Committee for Cyprus Affairs in London, D. N. Pritt developed, along with other progressive MPs, systematic activity championing the right of the people of Cyprus to decide their future free from British or any other foreign interference. Pritt was also a fervent supporter of the abolition of British bases in Cyprus and for a peaceful, democratic solution of the Cyprus problem.

As a legal defender of all fighters for freedom D. N. Pritt rightly earned the name of 'lawyer of the victims of imperialism'.

The Cypriot people remember Pritt when he visited Cyprus in 1956 to defend the leadership of AKEL, some 135 leaders, whom the oppressive colonial regime of Field-Marshal Harding arrested one night and detained in concentration camps and prisons. D. N. Pritt made a brilliant case of habeas corpus before the colonial Court but justice meted out by the colonial regime ran contrary to elementary human rights, and the AKEL leadership was kept in jail for over a year without any trial.

D. N. Pritt has earned a place in the hearts of the progressive people of Cyprus and will always be remembered as a great friend, as a staunch, consistent supporter of their struggle for liberation.

MICHAEL B. RUBINSTEIN

London

May I say how much I appreciate D. N. Pritt's review of the book, *Wicked, Wicked Libels* which I edited for Routledge (*Labour Monthly*, June 1972). I cannot tell you how moved I was to think that Pritt, at his age, had written such a perceptive review such a short time before his death. I would only add, although you must know this already, that he was rightly held high in the esteem and even the affection of the legal establishment though his political views were almost always anathema to it. I personally have friendly memories of him which I shall always treasure.

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ISABELLE BLUME

Member of the Presidential Committee of the World Council of Peace, Brussels

Even for a member of the World Council of Peace where his activity took many forms, it is difficult to render homage to a personality as rich as that of D. N. Pritt. Personally I will confine myself to speak of what he brought to us in the long battle for peace that he fought with us: the example of fidelity, in the understanding of events and of their evolution.

Faithful he was: to socialism, to the Soviet Union and the struggle for disarmament, and for peaceful coexistence between the peoples; faithful he was to aid the peoples to liberate themselves. He helped us by the clarity of his judicial intellect and his comprehension of the difficulties.

His example and his teaching remain with us. We are grateful to him for it.

GUS HALL

General Secretary, Communist Party of the USA, New York

Our friend and comrade, D. N. Pritt, was ever the lawyer for the defense against the power and corruption and terror of an old and dying world order. He was ever the advocate of that new world order that came into being with the triumphant establishment of the Soviet Union.

Truth was his weapon: the truth about the Reichstag fire, the truth about Korea, the truth about the liberation struggles in Africa, and yes, the truth about the repression in the United States of America. That search for truth, as he pursued it, was ever part of the world's great need to know the truth about the Soviet Union and the socialist world. The world's debt to him is great. We share that debt, as we also share the inspiration of his life.

Fortunately for us he had a long life and he used it well. All honour to his memory.

TONY AMBATIELOS

Greece

D. N. Pritt was a friend, as is well-known, of all oppressed and persecuted people. Among us—the more politically minded people in the Greek seamen's movement—he was known particularly for his progressive stand in the crucial pre-war years.

During the war years, D. N. Pritt became even better known to the seamen in the Federation of Greek Maritime Unions. He undertook to defend a case involving a whole crew before the Greek Court in London. It was at the time when the Greek Public Prosecutor with the consent of the Greek Government-in-exile had decided to crush our movement. A whole series of trials had begun and seamen in their hundreds found themselves in the dock for organising to defend their conditions. D. N. Pritt came to our aid. He appeared for the seamen, and so shattered the indictment that the Greek judges were forced to drop the case.

In the difficult post-war years for the Greek people, D. N. Pritt was in the forefront of the solidarity struggle in Britain and for this he will be remembered with admiration and warm affection.

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INFLATION—HOW IT BITES

Alan Brown*

THERE can scarcely be anyone working in British industry today who ever had a golden sovereign in his pay packet at the end of the week. If there were, his working life would provide a complete catalogue of inflation in Britain. When gold coins were withdrawn from circulation in 1914, and paper money put in their place, people felt instinctively that they were getting a debased form of currency. They were right. Paper, unbacked by solid metal, was the first push down the helter-skelter from which 'the pound in your pocket' has suffered—almost without let—ever since. For 98 years Britain had been on the gold standard, with the value of money relatively stable, but by 1914 the international strength of sterling (reflecting Britain's loss of supremacy in the world) had deteriorated to the point where available gold would no longer pay for necessary imports. The ruling class solution was to go over to a form of currency which, supposedly free of everything except the printing press, would allow the people's purchasing power to be manipulated downwards by Government decision. The presses are still running. Thus in the three months to mid-May 1972, the money stock was increased by some £780 million to a total of £21,750 million. And now the pound floats. The debasing of the currency has been carried a stage further.

Inflation has been a friend (and simultaneous spectre) to British capitalism for the greater part of the century, though in a continuous way since the second world war. It has fitted snugly into the economic, moral and political character of the system, on the one hand enriching the haves, on the other hitting the people with greater harshness according to how far they are down the economic scale. When trade union strength made the pre-war policy of wage-cuts impossible, inflation came into its own. Its mechanics, though complicated in operation, are simple in essence: by a mixture of measures which increase prices, rents and interest rates, both governments and employers put the pay and pensions of all working people on a downward escalator. This in turn forces the people to run upwards—via pay and other claims—simply to try and stay where they are. Politically, the value of this to the ruling class is that the much publicised pay demands, battles and settlements can then be presented

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in the press and in parliament as the *motive force* of inflation: the workers are 'attacking their own living standards'. And far too many people fall for the sleight of hand involved. While they see quite clearly that their own pay demands are necessary to keep a roof over their heads, food in their stomachs and their families on customary living standards, they are sometimes led to believe that other people's demands are too high. This fallacy—that the wage battles of the trade unions produce inflation—should be a main point of attack by all in the trade union and labour movement.

A classic case is that of the miners, as their evidence* to the Wilberforce Enquiry made clear. This showed that between 1960 and 1971, average gross earnings of underground workers rose from £17.10 to £30.20. However, this increase in gross weekly earnings of just under 77 per cent was almost entirely absorbed by a rise in prices of nearly 60 per cent. Further, because of the effects of taxation, they estimated that average take-home pay of underground workers, in real terms, fell by about 5 per cent during that period! This is all the more criminal when one considers that output per manshift in 1960 was about 28cwt, and that this had risen to 44cwt in 1971: an increase in output of 57 per cent, but lower real wages.

Largely, ruling class propaganda centres around these same three statistics: pay, prices and productivity. And all lead to fallacies when the 'experts' in the press do their little sums and charge the working class and its organisations with pushing up pay faster than the country can afford.

Generally, they use increases in the 'average earnings' statistics provided by the Department of Employment. These, however, are gross earnings figures, taking no account of the fact that the standard rate of income tax is 38.75p in the pound, or that people pay national insurance and other contributions before taking their earnings home. To quote the NUM case:

> Our members have suffered in two ways from inflation. Firstly, they have moved into earnings ranges carrying greater tax liability; and, secondly, they have seen the purchasing power of their take-home pay reduced by rising prices. Moreover, the removal of the reduced rates of taxes, and the lowering of the 'threshold' level of earnings at which standard rate becomes payable, have both served to increase the degree to which tax cuts into our members' incomes.

The miners worked out that in 1965 the 'threshold' level of earnings at which standard rate was payable was 77 per cent of their average

* *A Special Case?*, edited for the National Union of Mineworkers by John Hughes and Roy Moore, *Penguin Books*, 164 pp., 35p.

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earnings for a married man with no children. By 1971 this was down to only 41 per cent of average earnings. The corresponding figures for a married man with two children were 107 per cent in 1965 and 67 per cent in 1971.

From time to time the propagandists use other pay statistics, but though they can all be used to produce slick, misleading arguments, they are of little value at all unless used with extreme caution. None takes into account the rock bottom incomes of those hundreds of thousands prevented from working and down to unemployment benefit. Yet for those who argue that static or lower pay levels, coupled with static or rising productivity, would do away with inflation, these figures are obligatory. Many manufacturers who have 'shed' labour over the past few years have declared that production has been unaffected, and under these circumstances unemployment becomes the equivalent of a simple cut in wage bills. The cause of inflation is not high wages, so our economic wondermen should not be so staggered that the Tories have been able to do the 'impossible' and produce mass unemployment and inflation at the same time.

Much has been written about the Cost of Living Index and its effect when used to help determine pay settlements, particularly since it also ignores the problem of higher taxation and social security payments. Another fundamental flaw in it, which is not quantifiable, is its inability to reflect the higher prices concealed by the reduced durability of manufactured goods. To accurately guage price increases it is necessary to compare like with like year by year, and reductions in the durability of commodities can effect the accuracy of the statistics to a marked degree. Manufacturers increasingly rely on 'in-built obsolescence' as a means of increasing sales and disguising price rises. And while they might argue that competition forces them to reduce component durability, thus allowing them to keep price increases down, selling a less durable article for a lower price is no saving to the consumer. Selling it at a higher price is double robbery.

In their efforts to prove the case against 'inflationary' wage increases the experts have declared with regularity, not to say monotony, over the years that 'wages are going up faster than prices.' If this had been so, there ought to be millions of workers with bank accounts or mattresses stuffed with unusable money, for far too much of it must be chasing far too few goods. Instead, we have the most desperate attempts by manufacturers of all kinds to encourage people to spend money they simply do not have.

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Clearly production has risen at the same time—though you would not think so from reading the economic whizz-kids.

Governments and employers do most of the talking about wages and inflation—not surprisingly, since their policies produce the problem. The Government's constant tender care for the needs of monopoly, coupled with the employers' demand for maximum profit, produce the pressures which debase the currency and destroy its purchasing power. The inflationary role of governments is both pernicious and many-pronged. They increase taxation constantly for the mass of the people, using vast amounts of it on defence—here and abroad—and also to feed to private industry; they encourage high interest rates which also take money from the people and transfer it to the money-lenders and monopolies; and they use legislative measures (such as the Housing Finance Bill which will again force up rents and house prices) to cut purchasing power and thereby depreciate the currency.

State expenditure on arms and armies is a dead-weight on the economy, taking resources out of productive use to manufacture arms and to staff the Forces. By their nature, arms are not generally for resale, nor are armies productive. There is no 'return' on them. But they have to be paid for. So the people's purchasing power is reduced by an amount equal to their cost.

Government-inspired high interest rates serve monopoly and finance capital in the most direct form, at the same time as they add fuel to the inflationary bonfire. At every stage of production, from the building of a factory and installation of machinery, to the purchase of raw materials and storage of finished goods by manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer, the 'cost of money' is a major item. An increase in this cost affects every part of the production and distribution process. In fact it has a leap-frogging effect, since additional amounts are added by the cost-plus mark-up as commodities change hands. When British Petroleum borrows £360 million to finance its Forties Field development in the North Sea Gas scramble, every 1 per cent rise in the interest payable on the loan will mean an extra £3,600,000 paid by BP to the bank each year. But this will work its way through the pricing structure from pipeline to consumer and mean that something in excess of £3,600,000 will be added to the retail price—enriching both the bank and BP, but adding to the cost of living.

Closely allied to the money-lenders proper are the speculators who breed and grow fat on land, housing and allied shortages, but who use the banks and insurance companies to provide their financial

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ammunition. The explosion in the prices of housing, factory space, land, city centre offices and high street shops, is another way in which enormous tribute is drawn from the mass of the people (who pay through higher prices and rents) by those who add nothing to the output of commodities

The intense competition to sell commodities—which does not wane under monopoly conditions—is increasingly competition between the monopolies themselves. However, by agreement, it excludes the field of prices and concentrates on advertising, gimmickry and the monopolising of retail outlets. Far from a price war we have a tacit agreement that each will raise prices by an approximately equivalent amount and at about the same time (a situation we frequently see when, on the front page of our evening paper, we find that monopoly 'X' has increased its prices—while on the back page the stop press catches up with the equivalent increases announced soon after by monopolies 'Y' and 'Z'). There are sufficiently few of them in the monopoly league for a wink to be just as good as a nod.

Finance capital (the banks, insurance companies, monopolies) is swallowing one industry after another in its search for maximum profit. What Maxwell Joseph Wants is Watneys, to the tune of £413 million, and there will be a fat bill to be paid later by the customers. And, of course, the chase for maximum profit sends countless millions of pounds abroad, using money needed for British industrial investment, to take full advantage of new technological developments. Low rates of productivity, through the underuse of such investment, are also part of the reason for the pound purchasing less.

With the manipulation of prices, investment and wages policy in the hands of a decreasing number of highly powerful interests, bent on securing maximum profit, inflation cannot disappear (unless, perhaps, to be replaced by its twin evil, deflation). But it can, and it does, get worse. It reaches a point where the *Times* (April 19, 1972) refers to it as 'The Pernicious Danger' (i.e. to the system, not the people) and says that 'the margin of protection that the British economy enjoys from rampant inflation has probably been narrower in the past 18 months than at any time since the war.' Like all capitalist strategies, inflation only works when it is controllable and controlled. Two months later (June 16, 1972) the same paper decided that 'inflation . . . is a political problem' and sighed itself back to the nineteenth century, dreaming about what could be done 'if the late twentieth century political situation were as favourable to a stable currency as was the political situation of the nineteenth

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century.' Capitalist economics have taken their toll over a century. Inflation, part panacea and part nightmare of the ruling class in a declining economic system with a rising working class, has not done the trick. For the working class inflation certainly is a political problem. There is no strictly economic solution. It is when the working people take this to heart that the ruling class will really stand in fear.

NEW FORMS OF STRUGGLE

Finlay Hart

SOME people in the labour movement cannot accept the fact that the conflict between the working class and the capitalists cannot be reconciled. Try as they may to curtail the activities of workers and their workshop representatives with Turner-Mond agreements, Whitley Councils, and provisions for avoidance of disputes, class conflicts are becoming sharper and more irreconcilable. The history of labour relations reveals that the forms of struggle between workers and employers, the people and governments will change in accordance with the economic and political circumstances and the political maturity of the contestants.

The Wilson Government was defeated in June 1970. It had failed to make capitalism work. The disillusionment over its purposive technological and scientific concern with stopping inflation at the expense of wages allowed the Tories to take over. Heath's Government decided to tackle the problems of the economy in the good old fashioned way of letting the weakest go to the wall. Economic strength was to be determined by the financial stability and profitability of the particular capitalist concern. Firms that were not showing profitable balance sheets were classified as 'lame ducks' by the newly appointed Secretary for Trade and Industry, Mr John Davies. By these standards the comparatively new shipbuilding consortium, Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, was forced into bankruptcy by the refusal of the Government to provide the £6 million necessary to meet its immediate wages and materials bills pending payment of ships under construction. All the formal things that had been done in other factory and shipyard closures were repeated when it became known that the Government intended to sacrifice UCS. Meetings, demonstrations, representations to the Prime Minister, and Govern-

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ment ministers and MPs, workers, councillors and wide sections of the people were involved but failed to change the Government's determination to allow 6,000 shipyard workers to be thrown on the scrapheap along with many thousands more whose firms supplied materials to the yards.

It was on Friday July 30, 1971, the first ever work-in started. Workers in Italy and France had been involved in stay-in strikes. Workers in Britain had on occasions sit-ins, and miners in Wales and Scotland had experienced stay-down strikes. There was no precedent for a work-in. The simplicity and effectiveness of the tactic within the strategic aim of maintaining the yards as productive units and not allowing them to be scrapped, and at the same time retaining the existing work force, was a direct challenge to the Government. It had immediate repercussions.

The whole British labour movement responded to support an action where the workers took control of the yards and permitted the liquidator to carry on with the completing of the ships under construction. Workers whom the liquidator dismissed as surplus to requirements were retained in the yard and worked with their mates who were still on the payroll. The work-in members were paid from the funds from the most generous donations ever known in any working class struggle. A new feeling of confidence expressed itself throughout every section of the movement; the Scottish TUC and the British TUC gave the work-in their blessing. The standing ovations to the leaders of the work-in wherever they went affected even the 1971 Labour Party Conference.

The outcome of the almost 12 months stand by the UCS workers and their leaders has proved that the determination to go beyond the older forms of struggle and adopt new militant forms can succeed. The latest work-in is at the Briant Colour Printing Company in Peckham, London, with about 150 employees. The joint managing director of the company stated it had made a profit of £665,000 last year but lack of ready money was forcing it into liquidation. In this case the workers are combining a work-in with a stay-in by moving in bedding and food until their jobs are safe.

Soon after the work-in started in Clydebank, the workers of Plesseys at Alexandria, Dunbartonshire, which had acquired the Naval Torpedo Factory with all its expensive equipment and machinery, took possession of the factory. The workers accused the owners of taking over the factory at a bargain price with the intention of moving the machinery to its other factories south of the border. They remained in possession until the factory was sold with all

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its machinery intact. No one, night or day, entered the factory without the permission of the workers in control of the gates.

Almost simultaneously workers in the River Don steelworks in Sheffield threatened a work-in when British Steel planned to close the works with its unique heavy forge. British Steel relented.

In the little town of Mold, population 8,000 among the North Wales hills, the American-owned Allis Chalmers agricultural machinery plant was threatened with closure. The workers occupied the plant and they remained in possession until the works were taken over by Bomfords of Uttoxeter.

The above and a number of other occupations demonstrate the growing determination by workers not to allow their factories to become derelict and the machinery sold off as in the past. It has compelled government intervention and indicates a new determination among large sections of workers not to accept redundancies and factory closures as a way of life.

One of the most recent examples is the eight-week sit-in at the Crannac furniture factory in Novan, County Meath. It employed 30 men on the manufacture of high class domestic furniture and almost all production was exported to the United Kingdom. The factory was put into voluntary liquidation by its owners. The sit-in was supported by local clergy, trade unionists and local businessmen. It received a lot of attention from the press and television. With the help of an interest-free loan from the Irish Government a new Crannac Co-operative Society will buy out the old company for £40,000. Every employee will be a shareholder, having put in the redundancy compensation received when the liquidator was called in. They will carry on in a crisis-ridden competitive unplanned capitalist system, but the action of the workers compelled the Irish Government to grant an interest-free loan and save the factory from closing.

Towards the end of last year the engineering unions submitted a package of demands to the Engineering Employers' Federation. The employers estimated it would cost them an additional £700 million if the claims were met by the 5,000 member firms, who between them employ more than two million workers. The reply of the engineering unions was to instruct their members to pursue their claims on a plant by plant basis up and down the country. Where acceptable offers were not made by employers the shop stewards developed in a number of cases a new strike practice. Instead of walking out of the factories the workers stayed in the factory and carried through a sit-in.

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Every sit-in has its own characteristics. Two members of Mitra Consulting Group carried out a survey of this strike form, which while not new had never been practised on any wide scale in Britain in the past. The Mitra report states that, since the work-in at UCS, worker occupation of factories has been increasing. They have ranged from full-scale occupation with management and staffs being prevented from entering the establishment, to the situation where management and shop stewards agreed that the sit-in should take place in the canteen.

It is estimated that there has been anything up to a hundred sit-ins in the recent months. In Manchester district alone by the middle of June this year there had been 32 sit-ins. Of all the main engineering districts Manchester has gained the most experience in this form of strike weapon.

Those involved in sit-ins believe there are certain advantages over normal strike action. Internal control is better than control by external pickets. Clashes with the police are avoided. Members taking part are better informed of the management's actions, and, very important, there is no chance of work being done by members of the staff or scabs. A sit-in keeps the men united, and reports show that there is less drifting away to other jobs than with a normal strike and no drift back to work.

Two reasons have been given as to why the movement in Manchester developed the sit-ins. One is that occupation of a factory prevents managements from locking out workers, and the other is that as sit-ins take place on private property there is less chance of direct conflict with the police.

This latter point raises questions as to the development of this form of strike action in the future. Up to now employers have avoided a confrontation to put the strikers out of the factories. There has been some retaliation by cutting off heat and light and water. Such an action is not only a hardship on the workers but could damage machinery and plant. It could also help to alienate the public who are watching these events and could bring in forms of industrial support for the strikers with far-reaching consequences.

As the general application of this form of strike has taken the employers off their guard there is no doubt but that they are giving this matter very serious consideration. It is necessary therefore for the trade unions to work out, on the basis of these recent experiences, guide-lines for their members.

The new awakening that is introducing new forms of activity in support of the demand for the right to work and for higher wages

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and better working conditions is spreading. The deliberate defiance by trade unionists of the legislation dealing with industrial relations is a case in point. That conflict is, however, closely related to the economic struggle in which the Government is taking the part of the employers. What is new, or almost new (shades of George Lansbury), is the decisions of local authorities to refuse to administer the laws passed in parliament.

In the course of the next few months there will be a confrontation between a number of local authorities and the Government. One such skirmish has taken place on the Government's decision to stop milk to elementary school children. After a protracted period of resistance by some local authorities, the Government prevailed upon those authorities to 'respect' the law. This had the effect of embittering many councillors. The new stage represented by the growing opposition to the financial provisions for housing contained in a Bill for England and Wales and a separate Bill for Scotland will embrace more authorities and the defiance will grow.

A total of 27 local authorities in England and Wales and 26 in Scotland have already declared that they will refuse to operate the new legislation. This is unprecedented. Undoubtedly many more will take similar decisions before October, the operative month for the new legislation. Already tenants' associations with the support of shop stewards' committees and the trade unions are preparing to support the rebel councils. At the same time tenants are preparing to initiate rent strikes where public authorities decide to operate the respective acts.

This Government aimed to solve the general crisis of capitalism by cutting down the workers' share in the economy and improve the share of the industrial and finance capitalists. The working class is awakening to the idea that life has more to offer. This great awakening stimulated by the actions one year ago of the men and women in the Upper Clyde shipyards, is revealing a new determination to make our country fit for workers to live in.

LABOUR MONTHLY BOUND VOLUME FOR 1971

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CORRESPONDENCE:

The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx

DR ALEXANDER MALYSH, in his review of the English translation of Ernest Mandel's *La Formation de la Pensée Economique de Karl Marx* (*LM*, June 1972), claims to have observed 'a number of grave errors in translation'. He cites only one example, however, and this proves to be not an 'error in translation' at all, but a faithful rendering of what appears in the French original, published in Paris so long ago as 1967. And Malysh has evidently not compared the translation he ventures to criticise with the original text of the book translated. If Mandel has misquoted Mehring in the passage referred to, that is a different matter, and Malysh's quarrel is with Mandel, not with his translator.

And has Mandel misquoted Mehring? Yes—not, however, by 'substituting' anything, as Malysh alleges, but by *omitting* some words: no doubt inadvertently, since no dark political misrepresentation seems to result. Here is the passage in question, rewritten to include the words that Mandel left out: your readers may like to correct their copies of the book:

'They [Marx and Engels] had in common the same philosophical starting point, namely, Hegel's dialectics [Bruno] Bauer's "self-consciousness", and Feuerbach's humanism; they then made the acquaintance of British and French socialism; but whereas for Marx the French revolution became the means whereby he ordered his thoughts regarding the struggles and aspirations of his epoch, for Engels the same role was played by British industry.'

Mandel should certainly have spotted and corrected this mistake which he had overlooked in 1967—a slip of his pen, or a Paris printer's error?—when he read the proofs of the English translation of his book. As translator, my fault was to be too respectful of Mandel's text, or at least of his quotations: I should have taken more of what Malysh calls 'liberties'!

BRIAN PEARCE
New Barnet

Professor Malysh replies:

REGARDING Brian Pearce's complaint I wish to say that in reviewing the English edition of Mandel's book I did not, of course, set out to analyse the quality of Brian Pearce's translation. That lay quite outside my purpose. In any case it would be quite improper for a Russian, like myself, to do this. But on reading the book even I noticed some vexing translation errors. Brian Pearce says: 'Malysh has evidently not compared the translation he ventures to criticise with the original text of the book translated.' Quite the contrary.

The original of the quotation in my review is not Mandel's erroneous French translation but Mehring's German text. Contrary to Brian Pearce's belief, here Mandel has been not just 'omitting some words', but indeed '*substituting*' something. The original text reads: 'Gemeinsam war ihnen der philosophische Ausgangspunkt: Hegels Dialektik, Bauers Selbstbewusstsein, Feuerbachs Humanismus, dann hatten sie den englischen und französischen Sozialismus kennengelernt, *aber nunmehr war für Marx die französische Revolution*, für Engels die englische Industrie zum Mittel *Selbstverständigung* über die Kämpfe und Wünsche der Zeit geworden.' Mehring's thought is distorted in both the French and in the English edition, which here repeats the negligence of the French. Further to what I have already said in my review, both

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Mandel and Brian Pearce ought to be reproached for an unsatisfactory translation of the German term '*Selbstverständigung*', often encountered in Marxist literature. This term is usually rendered by the English equivalent 'self-clarification' (cf. *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 505) and not by the ponderous phrase: 'Le moyen de se mettre d'accord avec lui-même' or 'the means whereby he ordered his thoughts'.

It is an established tradition in scientific translations that one should not translate from a translation. It is strange that Brian Pearce in effect disputes this tradition and takes groundless offence at a very courteous remark addressed to him, and Mandel no less, regarding their manner of quoting.

Further Brian Pearce writes: 'Dr Malysh claims to have observed "a number of grave errors in translation". He cites, however, only one example.' The translator's grievance is easily satisfied. One has the impression that many, if not all, quotations from MEGA and 'Grundrisse' have been translated not from the German, as should have been the case, but from the French. Hence varying degrees of unpraiseworthy divergence from the original *German* text. Two totally different works—Engels's article '*Umrisse* zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie' and Marx's fundamental work '*Grundrisse* der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie'—figure in the English edition of Mandel's book under the identical title 'Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy' (cf. pp. 10, 11, etc.). The 'Manifesto of *the Communist Party*' is everywhere not quite accurately named the 'Communist Manifesto', and so on. In my view an unwarranted 'liberty' of translation is taken even in the dedication of the book: 'A Gisèle, qui m'a fait écrire ce livre *dans la joie*' becomes 'To Gisèle, who enabled me to write this book *as a happy man*.'

LABOUR MONTHLY FIFTY YEARS AGO

The labour movement in Great Britain has a continuous history extending over something like one hundred years. Its origins, of course, go back further—to the numerous small trade clubs and societies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to the first attempts at working class political organisation made (under the inspiration of the revolution in France) by the Corresponding Societies in the years after 1791, to the strikes and ephemeral organisations of the factory operatives under the first stress of the industrial revolution—efforts hampered by the Combination Acts, which made trade unionism illegal between 1800 and 1824—and to the part played by the workers in the struggle which preceded the Reform Bill.

The period following the French revolution, which was also the period of the great economic changes which we call the industrial revolution, saw the creation of the modern working class of Great Britain and its first struggles to assert itself against the oppressions and barbarities of the new factory system. . . .

If no living movement is created save on the basis of material conditions to which it is an appropriate response, equally none is created until the material stimulus has been answered in men's minds with an appropriate diagnosis and an appropriate call to action.

(From 'The British Labour Movement—A Retrospect', by G. D. H. Cole, *Labour Monthly*, August 1922)

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BOOKS

The Making of a Radical
Scott Nearing
Harper & Row, 308 pp., available on order from Central Books

THIS IS THE POLITICAL autobiography of a well-known American radical, who has written over 50 popular books and travelled widely, lecturing not only in his own country, but throughout the world, including most socialist lands.

By profession a teacher, he early in life accepted the maxim 'the place of the teacher is on the firing line', and believed the essence of good teaching consisted of 'arousing interest, imparting knowledge and stimulating creative effort.' When such thinking led him, still a liberal believing in the shibboleths of American democracy, to question the distribution of wealth and to head up a committee against child labour, he was summarily sacked from his post as Economics Professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He now understood why the head of the School had advised him: 'Stress anything you care to . . . though it might be wise to go light on distribution of income. It is a delicate subject here.'

In his succeeding years he joined and left both the Socialist and Communist Parties but, irrespective of other differences, he has always been ready to join in the defence of workers under capitalist attack, including Communists, and to this day is a firm supporter of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. After joining the Socialist Party in 1917 when it was fighting against the imperialist war, he resigned from it in 1922 because it was now devoting its 'energies to criticising and denouncing the Soviet Union.'

It was 1927 before he joined the Communist Party, but in 1930 he decided to resign because of Party insistence that he not publish his latest book, *The Twilight of Empire*, because it treated 'imperialism as a social pattern developing throughout history'. His resignation was rejected, and he was expelled. While his violation of Party discipline was wrong, the reasons for his expulsion were tied up with the factionalism of Jay Lovestone. It is ironic to read Lovestone's dictum that the 'sharpening struggles pass up such elements as Scott Nearing and deposit them on the scrap heap of the revolution.' Lovestone today and for many years has been the agent and mouthpiece of everything rotten in America and heads the anti-Soviet crusade in the top leadership of the AFL-CIO.

While unwaveringly opposing throughout the years US imperialist policies at home and abroad, and propagating the need for socialist revolution, Nearing has been essentially a 'free lancer'. He withdrew to a farm and developed strange ideas, e.g. that 'Western civilisation is finished'; the American people are 'without history, misled, deluded and inexperienced', and although 'I have advised, opposed and warned you' you 'continue on your way to perdition'; and he adopted the philosophy of 'no killing of humans in war and no animals for food' and 'no poisons or corruptives to be taken into our bodies or applied to the land.'

Despite Nearing's denial that his actions were 'an ivory tower retreat', they were precisely that. However, in 1953, he again emerged on the public stage for five months each year and again became the propagandist against McCarthyism and US imperialism and the defender of socialism, espe-

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cially socialist Russia, China and Cuba.

In the concluding chapters, he expresses confidence and hope in the new generation in America, but poses some sharp questions for the new developing socialist societies, emphasising that socialism is 'a young, changing and developing' system.

Clearly, Nearing is not a Marxist in his fundamental thinking. He prefers to say 'I am not an orthodox Marxist', and thinks 'we must tackle the individual and the cosmos and get them in proper relation and perspective in society. The new synthesis will not be Marxism, but Marxism will have made an important contribution to one of its aspects.'

As one who first made Nearing's acquaintance in 1924, when he as a trustee of the Garland Fund, agreed to a grant to the YCL for educational purposes, I have, while disagreeing with him sharply on occasion, respected his integrity of thought and action. At 89 years of age, the final paragraph of his 53rd book states: 'I have had the rare privilege of being present, and of assisting slightly, at the death process of one social system and through the early stages of the development of an alternative pattern of society. It this were all that life had granted me, it would be a lifetime well spent.'

JOHN WILLIAMSON

My Generation
Will Paynter
Allen & Unwin, 172 pp., £3

IT IS REFRESHING to read of yesterday's toil, or lack of opportunity to toil, portrayed so vividly and authentically in this book. It is like a breath of fresh air compared with what is usually written on what people make of their lives.

The chapter dealing with the author's childhood leading up to adolescence brings out the sensitivity of his character. His life like many others with the 'curling box' was a painful hard slog. The eerie noises of the pit, with or without light, are resurrected along with the eerie weary walk home over lonely roads after a hard day's work. That generation knew very little about the joys and make-believe of childhood. They confronted life in the most raw and cruel circumstances and were transformed into men overnight.

The poverty and depressing life of the one-industry community living on the dole had a profound effect on Bill Paynter and the generation to which he belonged. This became the dominant theme of their lives. Everything in the community was geared to protest against the inhuman condition which people had to endure. The chapels, pubs, clubs, along with every institution seeking life in the valleys, joined with the political parties in one mighty movement in an effort to secure justice. The stirring notes of a brass band brought everybody in the Rhondda onto the streets in protest about the one thing that overwhelmed their lives. The indifferent attitude of the establishment and brutal way in which their henchmen, the police force, more renowned for their beef than their sense, dealt with this great human tragedy is brought alive and well portrayed.

His account of the struggle against fascism and the contribution he made as an official in the Miners' Union at area and national level hardly does justice to him. He has been much too modest as I can testify from personal experience as one of his colleagues.

The last chapter makes reference to his departure from the Communist Party and his acceptance of the post with the Commission on Industrial Relations. Let me say at once that I do not believe that these decisions were made for personal gain or mercenary reasons. I know that this would be absolute anathema to his

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character. However, they are decisions that I fail utterly to understand. What he failed to achieve inside the trade union movement can hardly be achieved from outside. To me the test is a simple one. It is not whether one can justify the action to oneself but more importantly as to whether it can do harm to the movement which he has served so well and with such devotion unselfishly. As Marx once stated: 'He whom you have to convince is master of the situation.'

This book should be read by his generation as a reminder of what some of that generation had to endure, and by the present generation in order that the forces that oppose progressive movements shall be unmasked and presented in their stark naked reality.

DAI DAN EVANS

An Ill-fated People
Lawrence Vambe
Heinemann, 254 pp., £3.50.

GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONS and Rhodesia have been much in the news lately. So it was stimulating to see what Mr Vambe, an African journalist from Rhodesia, has to say about an earlier Government Commission, that headed by Morris Carter back in 1925. He writes (page 160):

'The Commission did not commend itself to educated Africans. They understood at once that the policy of land segregation was a foregone conclusion and many of them boycotted the Commission. When it interviewed many Africans, particularly the untutored people in the rural areas, the Commission's enquiries were slanted so as to draw out the opinions it needed to back up its conclusions. By asking rhetorical questions, by accentuating the virtues of segregation and by other sophisticated arguments too devious for African chiefs and headmen to see through, it was able to extract the verdict it required. When it submitted its report in 1925, it stated that black and white Rhodesians were in favour of possessory segregation. Thus it set the stage for the enactment of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 upon which white Southern Rhodesia was to build its citadel of supremacy.'

Times have changed. Two generations of racist rule, decades of peaceful and patient struggle for democratic rights and repeated betrayal of their interests by successive British governments have taught the African people of Rhodesia to stand on their own feet. They have learned to see through the hypocritical concern for their welfare displayed by Tory politicians when they want the Africans to acquiesce in their own slavery. Some of them may have been duped by Morris Carter, but Lord Pearce was sent away with a flea in his ear.

Lawrence Vambe's book helps one to understand where Rhodesian Africans have come from so to speak, even if—as a work of reminiscence—it offers no ideas about the present or the future. He was born into the VaShawasha people, one of the Shona groups which together comprise the bulk of the indigenous population. (The other main group are the Ndebele, or Matabele, a relatively recent, nineteenth-century off-shoot of the Zulu nation.) His people, like so many of the other Shona tribes, were heavily defeated by the colonists in the great uprising of 1896-97. But they were more fortunate than most in that a Jesuit mission was established in their midst soon after their defeat, and it helped to stabilise their occupation of land well situated near Salisbury, and provided schooling of a quality that was rarely available to Africans then or for many years after.

As an impressionistic account of the impact of a rapacious colonialism upon the lives and minds of a previously independent and self-sufficient

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people, this is a fascinating book. But it also has an interest which the author could not have intended. For it reveals the author as that contemporary figure of the African scene which needs to be recognised and understood—the reactionary middle class tribalist. It may seem strange so to describe a man of journalistic achievement and *élite* status, but the evidence is there in his own reflections on the situation in Rhodesia. He tends to blame the Ndebele for the misfortunes of the Shona. He lauds the old Shona culture and social patterns without balancing that legitimate pride with some recognition of the severe limitations of a pre-literate, pre-feudal social and economic system. And he reveals a complete lack of understanding of the nature of colonialism, and its relationship to capitalism. He struggles to explain the brutal and (for his tribe) unprecedented conduct of the white settlers in terms of human nature, and believes that at heart most Africans are capitalists.

Unfortunately, views like Mr Vambe's are not uncommon in urban educated circles in many independent African states today. Politicians of this sort, though personally far detached from their tribal origins, all too often revert to the tribal frame of reference to whip up passions against opponents and to secure support for bankrupt policies. Mr Vambe is no politician himself, but in 1959 when the Central African Federation was beginning to fall apart and it was already widely discredited before African opinion, he took up a job as spokesman in London for Welensky's Government. His ideas might today be more profound had he then identified himself more closely with the continuing struggle of his people for their freedom and independence.

It would take a rash man to prescribe a solution to the problem posed by the prevalence of false and backward-looking ideas on the African continent. But I am convinced that part at least of the answer lies in the spread of a scientific approach to the analysis of imperialism past and present. More Marx and Lenin will help the African intelligentsia to grapple with the challenge of the transition from national to social revolution. ALAN BROOKS

The Durham Miners 1919-1960
W. R. Garside
Allen & Unwin, 544 pp., £6

WITH CAREFUL and painstaking research the author has endeavoured to show the problems of the coal industry as they affected the Durham miners. He traces, through this stormy and bitter period, the way in which the miners tried to protect both themselves and their trade union, and also, after nationalisation, what they believed to be 'their industry'. One sees a section of the working class whose whole life and experience teaches them the harsh truths of class warfare.

Despite the strong desire of Mr Garside to be the impartial and objective historian, running like a thread through the whole book one sees the ruthless and determined efforts of the coal-owners to maintain their power, privilege and profit, on the one hand, and on the other the cautious union leadership anxious to maintain the *status quo* of the system. The callous arrogance of the coal-owners of the twenties is illustrated by such statements as: 'I cannot see why they [the miners] object so much to working an extra half hour when they have nothing particular to do with their time.'

The section of the book dealing with the origins and course of the 1926 dispute gives insufficient attention to the guerrilla warfare waged prior to 1926, by the coal-owners, to lower

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wages and increase the working day. However, it brings out clearly the Government's preparations for an all-out confrontation, and the falseness of the oft-reiterated cliché of workers 'holding the country to ransom'. The author graphically describes the course of the general strike itself in Durham and thereby serves to highlight the betrayal and ultimate defeat of the miners. Here again the excess caution of the leadership shows itself. For example, whilst permitting Will Lawther to represent them unofficially on the Central Council of Action for Northumberland and Durham, the Durham Miners' Association (the only important trade union body in the coalfield) remained aloof. Thus the union contributed towards the miners' isolation in the struggle that followed.

The years between 1926 and 1939 are shown as a period of grim struggle and hardship as the owners endeavoured to take full advantage of the miners' defeats in both 1921 and 1926. However, the book is not wholly an accumulation of historical facts and reports. The authors' inclusion, in an appendix, of 'Life in a Pit Village' serves to highlight the real tragedy of the situation facing the individual miner and his family.

Garside shows that nationalisation of the mines raised hopes both amongst the miners and their leaders. But in fact, whilst nationalisation brought many advances to the miners in Durham, it succeeded in achieving a voluntary lengthening of the working day. This latter move was something the miners' old enemy, the coal-owners, had found impossible. The measure of the extent to which the miners' early illusions about nationalisation have been shattered, and of their realisation that the mines are still not theirs, can be seen in the recent splendid victory of the miners. It is interesting to note that the same fundamental demand of the miners in 1972, i.e. that the dangerous and arduous nature of their calling entitles them to a decent standard of living, was the basis of the case submitted to the Sankey Commission in 1919.

Despite any weaknesses of analysis in Mr Garside's book it is a valuable contribution to the history of the miners' struggles. It will surely earn its place alongside such works as those of Fynnes, the Webbs and Arnot. It should be on the shelves of every library wherever men dig for black gold. GEORGE SHORT

The Juggernauts
Graham Bannock
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 364 pp., £3.25

THE AUTHOR'S subtitle—'The Age of the Big Corporation'—provides this book with a theme which is both interesting and courageous. His title, *The Juggernauts*, suggests the judgement.

The author refuses to accept the complacent view, expressed quite often by some economists, that concentration has not increased much in the UK. He argues that even if one uses the 1958 and 1963 Censuses of Production, concentration of industry in the hands of giant firms has increased alarmingly. The 100 largest firms in the UK 'probably accounted in 1968 for over 50 per cent of all profits, a considerably higher percentage of total assets, and about one-third of total employment of all industrial and commercial companies' (p. 39).

He points out, quite rightly, that these are underestimates. I may add that research now going on suggests that, taking the last 60 years, concentration of output in the hands of the largest 100 firms has grown faster since 1950 than at any other time in that period. None of these estimates takes into

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account the great financial institutions!

Bannock's concern is to destroy a number of myths that surround the giant firms (or, should one say, with which the giant firms surround themselves). One myth is that these firms are as big as they are because production has to be carried out on such a large scale. Utilising his experience as an employee of some giant firms, Bannock considers the degree of concentration to be far greater than is justified in the name of 'economies of scale'. Perhaps he could have used the distinction, familiar to Marxists, between the centralisation of capital and the concentration of production.

An entire section is devoted to 'Corporate Clichés'. First to be paraded is the notion of 'scientific management'. He argues that 'the main difference between large corporations and the small . . . is that, although both make their strategy decisions almost entirely by hunch, there is a more pervasive tendency to scientific rationalisation after the event in the large corporation' (p. 168). In swinging style, the author pitches in to the clichés of the 'Technological Explosion', 'The Marketing Revolution' and 'Progressive Personnel Policies'.

Three biting chapters are devoted to 'Automotive Imperialism', the increased US domination of the UK vehicle industry.

The book is full of interesting facts and comment but the author finds it difficult to see a way out. He wishes to see a policy which would *reduce* concentration and simultaneously increase the power of 'market forces'. He wishes competition to be fostered, barriers to entry reduced and believes that increasing share ownership among workers would help. The problem is that competition leads directly to an increase in centralisation. The giant firms are the 'irrational forms' by which modern capitalism recognises the degree to which production has become social.

'Juggernauts' has come to mean institutions to which firms 'blindly sacrifice themselves or others' (Oxford English Dictionary). Before that blindness can be overcome, the roots of the giant corporations in the nature of capitalism will have to be revealed.

SAM AARONOVITCH

Unequal Exchange: A Study of the Imperialism of Trade
Arghiri Emmanuel
New Left Books, 454 pp., £4.75

TWO-THIRDS of this book is an elaboration of a theory of how present-day exploitation of underdeveloped countries by imperialism operates. The author, a political economist of Greek origin, departs from the standard Marxist concepts of international production relations, international divisions of labour and sources of imperialist profit, and produces a theory that imperialist exploitation is primarily carried out through trade in which the gap between wage levels in developed and underdeveloped countries plays the main part. Emmanuel's theorising leads him to the un-Marxist tendency to conclude that the basic world contradiction today is between 'poor' and 'rich' countries, that the working class in the advanced countries has become 'bourgeoisified' by its relatively higher wage levels, and that it benefits from the 'unequal exchange' in the trade between developed and underdeveloped.

The other third of the book, however, contains in appendixes a tactful but devastating criticism by Charles Bettelheim of the main features of Emmanuel's argument, including a refutation of such conclusions. Bettelheim, who writes in an extremely lucid style in contrast to the dense verbiage and diagram- and

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equation-littered text of Emmanuel, emphasises, for example, the fact that imperialism, especially today, embodies fundamentally an ever-increasing exploitation of the proletariat in the developed countries. All told, a fascinating debate, which becomes something of an 'unequal exchange' in itself due to Bettelheim's sharp, clear, Marxist analysis.

WILLIAM J. POMEROY

A History of the Irish Working Class
P. Berresford Ellis
Gollancz, 352 pp., £3.50.

THE BLURB describes this book as the 'first major study of Irish history from a socialist viewpoint since James Connolly's *Labour in Irish History*.' It deals with 'the whole Irish struggle for national and social freedom'. It does so in a constructive and sympathetic manner, but it is not a history of the Irish working class. It neither defines nor traces the historical origins of that class, and it fails to ask the key questions concerning it—relating to sectarian divisions and the 'economism' of the working class movement.

What does it add to *Labour in Irish History*? A section on Celtic communism, a chapter on Marx and the Fenians, and a sketch of the national struggle during Connolly's time and since. There is no new analysis, and quotations are given from writers of quite opposed standpoints. There are a number of errors of fact. Thus, John Leslie was not James Connolly's uncle. Lloyd George's Act of 1920 was the Government of Ireland not the Better Government of Ireland Act.

The book will serve as a useful introduction to the subject of Irish history. But it gives the impression of having been completed in a hurry possibly to meet a publisher's deadline. It has attempted more than is possible except through years of study, research, analysis and preparation. It is a plucky attempt, but those who read it must be wary. Thus the Irish Communist Organisation (neither communist nor yet much of an organisation) which began on the fringe of 'Celtic socialism' is now the principal disseminator of the 'two Irish nations theory', which must gladden Mr Craig's heart. There are many mistaken judgments which longer study would certainly have corrected. What a pity Mr Ellis did not put his foot down and demand another two years. As for the publishers—they put the reference notes at the end. An indefensible practice.

C. DESMOND GREAVES

She Knew She Was Right
Ivy Litvinov
Gollancz, 248 pp., £1.90

IN THE CASE of these short stories by Ivy Litvinov it is a pleasure to be able to confirm the claims that are made for them in the publisher's blurb. There is a certain cool detachment in the way Mrs Litvinov observes the world, drily sardonic on occasion; but a moving tenderness seeps through her style, most particularly in what seems like almost pure autobiography in that most excellent story 'Call It Love'. This appears also in her tender regard for, and understanding of, the animals she mentions: 'the Wogs' and 'Tyapa'. Only once does the author fail to reach her highest standard, in the story called 'To be a Daniel' which lacks her usual formal construction and cohesion.

Her English is fresh and original; the manner of its use suggests a knowledge of languages other than her own, which enables her to evaluate it and avoid the clichés to which much contemporary fiction seems subject. Her presentation of the contemporary Russian scene is powerful, for without comment, but by rigorous selection

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of detail in everyday domestic life and with the minimum of descriptive narrative, she evokes an entire way of life, often by omission as much as by statement.

The book is refreshing, and a certain iron integrity of a personal kind is not its least endearing feature.

WYN HENDERSON

The Soviet Army
S. S. Lototsky and others
Progress Publishers (Central Books), 352 pp., £1

IN HIS FOREWORD to this concise and factual history, Marshal and ex-blacksmith Kliment Voroshilov wrote that, in any country divided into antagonistic classes, there had never been—and could not be—an army like that of the USSR. This idea permeates the whole work, from the description of the foundation of the Red Army in 1918 out of workers' detachments and revolutionary soldiers to the account of how the Soviet armed forces were reinforced by workers' volunteers and partisans during the second world war, and of their political training in socialism both then and since. At the same time there is ample material about their organisation, equipment and battle experience for the student of military history, clearly set out. It is interesting also to contrast the notorious complaint of Mr (later Lord) Attlee that 'the Soviet Union never disarmed after the war' with the figures given on page 313—11,365,000 men in May 1945, and 2,874,000 men in 1948—which was approximately the same as that of the US and Britain combined, not to speak of France and other 'defenders of western civilisation', i.e. of imperialism.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Vladimir Mayakovsky—Poems, introduced by Victor Pertsov. Progress Publishers (Central Books), 278 pp., 45p.
Afternoon on the Potomac?, Roy Jenkins. Yale University Press, 60 pp., £1.50.
Ford Strike: The Workers' Story, John Mathews. Panther, 208 pp., 40p.
'On Our Knees'—Ireland 1972, Rosita Sweetman. Pan, 288 pp., 35p.
Cambao: the Yoke—the Hidden Face of Brazil, Francisco Juliao. Penguin, 192 pp., 35p.
Brazil: the People and the Power, Miguel Arraes. Penguin, 232 pp., 40p.
Servants of God or Masters of Men?, Victor Daniel Bonilla. Penguin, 304 pp., 60p.
The Economics of Soviet Merchant-Shipping Policy, Robert E. Athay. North Carolina Press (Oxford University Press), 150 pp., £3.60.
Lukács' Concept of Dialectics, I. Mészáros. Merlin, 212 pp., £2.50.
The Truth Game, Douglas Hurd. Collins, 254 pp., £1.50.
The Community of Oil Exporting Countries, Zuhagr Mikdashi. Allen & Unwin, 240 pp., £3.30.
Society, Schools and Humanity, Douglas Holly. Paladin, 158 pp., 50p.
Fidel Castro Speaks, edited by M. Kenner and J. Petras. Penguin, 426 pp., 75p.
Zapata and the Mexican Revolution, John Womach Jr. Penguin, 608 pp., £1.25.
Studies in Critical Philosophy, H. Marcuse. NLB, 228 pp., £3.25.
The Conquest of Bread, Peter Kropotkin. Longmans, 236 pp., £3.
Mutual Aid, Peter Kropotkin. Longmans, 278 pp., £3.50.
Creating a National Disability Income, Disablement Income Group, 26 pp., 25p.

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HOLIDAY PROMISE

THE holiday menace has struck our Fund! It is not that we grudge our readers their holidays—indeed one feels that holidays, having been fought for as a right, ought to be enjoyed by our readers in as many relaxing, stimulating or otherwise rewarding ways as possible—but it does show just how dangerously relaxing they can be when our total is only just over £50 instead of reaching towards that £100 target.

But in addition to thanking those who contributed to this month's total there is another word of thanks I would like to say: many associated with *Labour Monthly*, either as volunteer sellers at the trade union conferences and other events, or as writers of our book reviews, or callers at our office, will have come into contact with Ruth McNally. She has coped with the routine of much of the work in the *LM* office and with surprises and disasters when necessary, and always made the routine a pleasure and took the shocks as calmly as she could. At the beginning of June she handed over the demands of work for the journal to make the final preparations for her baby who is expected any day now as I write.

So we shall welcome a new citizen who will have all our good wishes, one of a new generation which it is our responsibility to provide for—in the routine things of life, and holidays as well.

Nicola Seyd

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